

# How to Develop Effective Summative Assessments

A Guide to support implementation of the Assessment Policy and the Assessment, Moderation and Examination Procedures

*While students can, with difficulty, escape from the effects of poor teaching, they cannot (by definition if they want to graduate) escape the effects of poor assessment. (Boud, 1995, p. 35)*

Assessment defines the curriculum (in its broadest sense – including what is taught, how it is taught and what students learn) because it defines what will be rewarded.

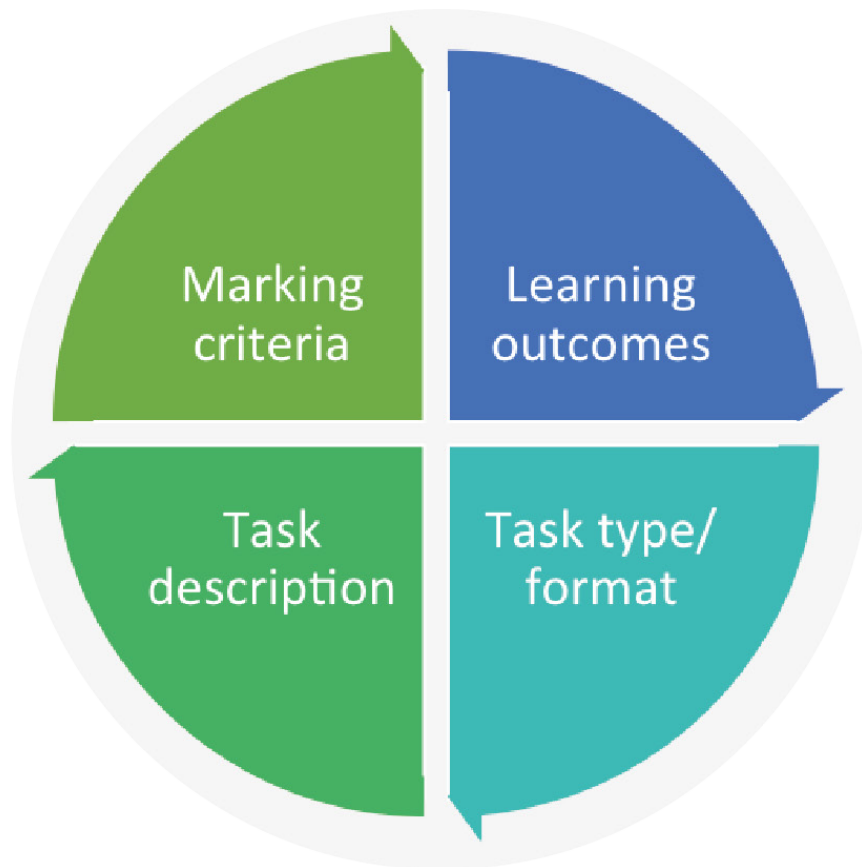
Assessment also defines academic standards and is used to certify student achievement. We need to be confident that our academic standards will stand up to scrutiny and have been rigorously benchmarked. See Benchmarking for further information on how to do this.

## What are the key components of assessment?

Assessment at ECU occurs within a criterion and standards referenced evaluation system. Standards are aligned to AQF levels, contextualised to specific disciplines and externally benchmarked.

The following components work together within this evaluation system and our Excellence Framework of Plan, Do, Review and Improve to ensure integrity of assessment and assurance of learning:

1. A measurable learning outcome(s) to be assessed.
2. A task type or response format (such as essay, group project, multiple choice, or oral presentation). Note: Try to use a range of formats, particularly for high-stakes summative assessments, and consider whether discomfort with the format may affect student performance, and what can be done to ameliorate that.
3. A task description that details what students are required to do to produce evidence of learning.
4. Marking criteria to ensure reliability and transparency of grading processes.



These key components combine to form an observational frame of reference (a window through which we view student performance and infer achievement). The trick is to design a frame of reference that will result in intended observations, and not others, being made, and to ensure consistency of observations, particularly where results are to be interpreted for certification purposes.

## References

Boud, D. (1995). *Enhancing Learning through Self Assessment*. London: Kogan Page.